GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:993
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2016
Import of Radioactive Food Products
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note of import of radioactive food products in the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government has been monitoring the import of such radiation affected food items;

(c) if so, the details thereof countrywise and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the technology available and used by the Government for detecting radioactive elements in the imported food items; and

(e) the other proactive steps taken by the Government to curb the import of such harmful food items?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)
(a) to (c): The Alert regarding possible contamination of food articles with radioactive elements was received with respect to only Japan. The import of food articles from the said country, particularly fresh produce such as seafood, fruits, vegetables and meat was therefore monitored with effect from March 2011 to February 2016. Three advisories dated 15th, 18th March, 2011 and 5th April 2011 were also issued for monitoring the food import from Japan for radioactive contamination. As none of the samples tested had failed on the basis of radioactive contaminations, the said advisory was withdrawn by the FSSAI on 17.02.2016.
(d): The Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology, Mumbai, Shriram Institute for Industrial Research, New Delhi and Monarch Biotech Pvt. Ltd., Chennai have been testing food articles for radioactive contamination. As per available information, gamma spectrometry is available and is used by the labs for detecting radioactive elements in imported food items.
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(e): India is one of the Member states of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South East Asia Region, and through International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), WHO assists its Member States in managing food safety risks, ensuring rapid sharing of information during food safety emergencies to stop the spread of contaminated food from one country to another. INFOSAN also facilitates sharing experiences and details of tested solutions among countries in order to optimize future interventions to protect the health of consumers.
Based on the alerts received from INFOSAN, the FSSAI issues directives from time to time to all the officials posted across the country to monitor, test and accordingly, if needed, issue further directives to curb the import of such harmful food items.
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